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TREASURY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, KAREN MATHIASSEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE FOR IRAQ DISCUSSES
NEIGHBORS MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADOR

REF: BAGHDAD 0782

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b),(d)

¶1. (S) Summary. Turkey's Special Representative for Iraq Oguz Celikkol told Ambassador on March 6 that the Iranians have agreed to attend the March 10 Baghdad meeting and the Neighbors of Iraq plus P5, but the Saudis remain unconvinced.

Celikkol plans to travel to Tehran on March 7 to lock in Iranian participation. All participants are looking for clarification from the Iraqis about security logistics, purpose and other details of the meeting. Assurances that the US is closely coordinating security arrangements would be helpful. Turkey has offered to fly the Saudis and the Bahrainis to Baghdad from Istanbul in an effort to persuade them to attend; the Egyptians have already accepted Turkey's invitation. Celikkol advised limiting the agenda to basic briefings and confirming the venue and date for a follow-on ministerial, preferably in Istanbul; anything more would be overly ambitious and might jeopardize the meeting's success.

¶2. (S) Celikkol reported that all, except perhaps the Iraqis, are onboard with holding the ministerial in Istanbul.

He suggested March 31. The Egyptians want to host the next Neighboring Countries meeting in Cairo, but are fine with Turkey hosting the larger neighbors-plus meeting. Ambassador extended Treasury's invitation to the March 16 International Compact meeting at the UN, which Celikkol agreed could be usefully paired with meetings in Washington to discuss the ministerial. Celikkol raised US participation in the March 19 Istanbul IRFFI meeting. End Summary.

¶3. (S) Ambassador and Celikkol discussed the March 10 Baghdad Neighbors plus P5 meeting and follow-on ministerial. Celikkol had returned on March 4 from Cairo, where FM Gul was the first Turkish FM invited to attend an Arab League meeting. Celikkol said he and FM Gul had met with the Egyptian FM, Iraqi FM Zebari, Iranian, Saudi and other officials regarding the upcoming Neighbors events. The Iranians said they plan to attend both meetings and Celikkol will travel to Tehran on March 7 to lock in their participation. He confirmed that PM Erdogan had called PM Ahmedinejad to encourage Iranian attendance and support.

¶4. (S) Celikkol appreciated Ambassador's review of reftel concepts for the Baghdad meeting. PM Zebari had been vague on Iraqi expectations for the meeting when he met with FM Gul in Cairo. Turkey views this meeting as largely symbolic, bringing together Iraq's neighbors for the first time in Baghdad. Celikkol agreed that Maliki's three main goals for the meeting seem realistic. He cautioned that, given the limited time, doing much more than a few briefings and confirming a date and venue, preferably Istanbul, for the follow-on ministerial might be overly ambitious and dissuade some from participating. Forming working groups and a

Contact Group would be better left to the ministerial and preparatory meetings. Celikkol said that almost everyone, except perhaps the Iraqis, is onboard with holding the ministerial in Istanbul, possibly on March 31. He asked for US support in nailing down the venue and date at the Baghdad meeting. Whether the ministerial should be expanded to include the G8 could also be decided in Baghdad.

15. (C) Celikkol clarified that the Egyptians want to host the next Neighboring Countries meeting in Cairo, but have no objections to the Turks hosting the larger Neighbors plus P5 ministerial in Istanbul. The Egyptians are prepared to hold the Neighboring Countries meeting before the ministerial and Turkey can support that, but other countries prefer to wait until April or later for the neighbors-only meeting. Celikkol confirmed that PM Erdogan spoke with PM Maliki on March 4 but did not raise the ministerial; the call was to discuss the imminent execution of three Iraqi women.

16. (C) Ambassador emphasized that the GOI, not the US, is organizing the Baghdad meeting, though we are offering suggestions and support. Celikkol said many participants are very nervous about security; assurances that the US is working closely with the Iraqis on security measures would be helpful, as would details about meeting location, transportation and other logistics. The GOT is waiting to hear whether Saudi and Bahraini officials have accepted Turkey's invitation to fly together from Istanbul to Baghdad, an offer Egypt has already accepted. FM Gul had extended the invitation before the Iraqis had organized a plane to fly participants in from Amman. Celikkol said Turkey is providing flight details to Iraqi and US authorities in Baghdad and will inform us as well.

ANKARA 00000508 002 OF 002

17. (C) Ambassador conveyed Treasury DepSec Kimmitt's letter encouraging the GOT to send a senior official to the UN SecGen's March 16 International Compact with Iraq meeting in New York. Celikkol agreed that it would be useful to combine this with meetings in Washington with Ambassador Satterfield and others to discuss the ministerial agenda and other details.

18. (C) Celikkol asked for more information on US participation at the International Reconstruction Fund Facility in Iraq (IRFFI) meeting scheduled for March 19-20 in Istanbul. Turkey has agreed to host the meeting at the request of the IRFFI Donor Committee. Celikkol's staff has been in contact with Treasury but would appreciate more information on the US delegation.

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